

ADP produces audio description for the “Insect Zoo”

By Joel Snyder, PhD – 10/1/22

Supported by a grant from the Aid Association for the Blind of the District of Columbia, the Smithsonian Institution’s “Insect Zoo” based at the National Museum of Natural History is now enhanced by audio description. Read or listen to a described tour of the O. Orkin Insect Zoo, where visitors get to observe, learn about and possibly even handle insects and other arthropods. The zoo has displays of live insects, preserved specimens, illustrations and a few tactile and interactive elements.

The tour was written by Sarah Studer; reviewed by Samantha Barry and Chris Mooney; and voiced, reviewed, and edited by Dr. Joel Snyder. Technical assistance was provided by Professor Dr. Francisco Lima, of Recife, Brazil, a blind specialist in audio description and the creator of www.snapsects.com.

The concept for the tour was inspired by the millions of visitors who have visited and enjoyed the O. Orkin Insect Zoo, those who will do so in the future, as well as two former workers at the National Museum of Natural History: the late Elaine R.S. Hodges, long-time scientific illustrator in the Department of Entomology, founder of the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators and editor of the Guild Handbook of Scientific Illustration; and the late Dr. Ronald W. Hodges, the head of the USDA’s Systematic Entomology Laboratory located at the Museum.

The tour’s fifteen sections include:

- The Amazing Arthropods
- 300 Million Years Ago
- Thriving Through Change
- Dealing With Danger
- Spider Strategies
- Insect Societies
- African Termite Mound
- Our House, Their House
- Entomologists at Work
- How Dangerous Are They?
- Sonoran Desert Dwellers
- Rainforest Riches
- Mangrove Swamp
- Freshwater Pond
- Insect Touch Cart and Tarantula Feeding

Listen in at: <https://naturalhistory.si.edu/visit/accessibility/audio-description/insect-zoo-audio-description-tour>

For people in Washington, DC, access information to the National Museum of Natural History and the Insect Zoo is at <https://naturalhistory.si.edu/visit/accessibility>.